

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A process for producing a methyl methacrylate, the process comprising the steps of:
- (i) decomposing methyl t-butyl ether to obtain an isobutylene and a methanol,
 - (ii) separating the isobutylene from the decomposition reaction mixture,
 - (iii) oxidizing the isobutylene to obtain at least one compound selected from a methacrylic acid and a methacrolein,
 - (iv) recovering a methanol from the remaining mixture obtained after the separation of the isobutylene, and
 - (iii) esterifying at least one compound selected from the methacrylic acid and the methacrolein with the methanol to produce a methyl methacrylate,
- wherein the recovered methanol has a 95% by weight or more of methanol based on the recovered methanol and contains at least one compound selected from t-butyl alcohol, water and methyl t-butyl ether.

2-4. (canceled).

5. (currently amended): The process according to claim ~~3~~1, further comprising a step of purifying the recovered methanol.

6. (original): The process according to claim 5, wherein the purified methanol contains about 95 % by weight or more of methanol based on the purified methanol.

7. (original): The process according to claim 5, wherein the purified methanol contains about 99 % by weight or more of methanol based on the purified methanol.

8. (original): The process according to claim 5, wherein the purified methanol contains about 99.9 % by weight or more of methanol based on the purified methanol.

9-10. (canceled).

11. (previously presented): A process for producing methyl methacrylate, the process comprising the step of esterifying at least one compound selected from the group consisting of a methacrylic acid and a methacrolein with a methanol to produce methyl methacrylate, wherein said methanol is a methanol which is recovered from decomposition of a methyl t-butyl ether.

12. (previously presented): The process according to claim 11, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 99 % by weight or more of methanol based on the recovered methanol.

13. (previously presented): The process according to claim 12, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 99.9 % by weight or more of methanol based on the recovered methanol.

14. (previously presented): The process according to claim 7, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 10 ppm by weight or less of t-butyl alcohol and/or about 10 ppm by weight or less of methyl t-butyl ether.

15. (previously presented): The process according to claim 8, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 10 ppm by weight or less of t-butyl alcohol and/or about 10 ppm by weight or less of methyl t-butyl ether.

16. (previously presented): The process according to claim 11, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 10 ppm by weight or less of t-butyl alcohol and/or about 10 ppm by weight or less of methyl t-butyl ether.

17. (previously presented): The process according to claim 12, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 10 ppm by weight or less of t-butyl alcohol and/or about 10 ppm by weight or less of methyl t-butyl ether.

18. (previously presented): The process according to claim 13, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 10 ppm by weight or less of t-butyl alcohol and/or about 10 ppm by weight or less of methyl t-butyl ether.

19. (new): The process according to claim 1, wherein the recovered methanol contains less than 1% by weight of component comprising t-butyl alcohol, water and methyl t-butyl ether.

20. (new): The process according to claim 5, wherein the recovered methanol contains less than 1% by weight of component comprising t-butyl alcohol, water and methyl t-butyl ether.

21. (new): The process according to claim 6, wherein the recovered methanol contains less than 1% by weight of component comprising t-butyl alcohol, water and methyl t-butyl ether.

22. (new): The process according to claim 7, wherein the recovered methanol contains less than 1% by weight of component comprising t-butyl alcohol, water and methyl t-butyl ether.

23. (new): The process according to claim 1, wherein oxidation step (iii) is conducted catalytically in vapor phase.

24. (new): The process according to claim 5, wherein oxidation step (iii) is conducted catalytically in vapor phase.

25. (new): The process according to claim 6, wherein oxidation step (iii) is conducted catalytically in vapor phase.

26. (new): The process according to claim 7, wherein oxidation step (iii) is conducted catalytically in vapor phase.

27. (new): The process according to claim 8, wherein oxidation step (iii) is conducted catalytically in vapor phase.

28. (new): The process according to claim 23, wherein esterification step (v) is conducted in liquid phase.

29. (new): The process according to claim 24, wherein esterification step (v) is conducted in liquid phase.

30. (new): The process according to claim 25, wherein esterification step (v) is conducted in liquid phase.

31. (new): The process according to claim 26, wherein esterification step (v) is conducted in liquid phase.

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32. (new): The process according to claim 27, wherein esterification step (v) is conducted in liquid phase.